

CLAIMS

1. A method for operating a client to retrieve desired content, said method comprising:

5 checking availability of said desired content from other clients on a peer-to-peer network;

if said content is available from at least one of said other clients, retrieving said content from at least one of said other clients via said peer-to-peer network; and

10 if said content is not available from at least one of said other clients, retrieving said content from a content server of said peer-to-peer network.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein retrieving said content from at least one of said other clients comprises:

15 retrieving a first portion of said content from a first other client of said peer-to-peer network; and

retrieving a second portion of said content from a second other client of said peer-to-peer network.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein said content server feeds said content into
20 said peer-to-peer network.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein a content broker selects said content server based on at least one of cost and availability.

5

5. The method of claim 1 wherein said desired content comprises a song.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein said desired content comprises a news program.

10

7. The method of claim 1 wherein said desired content is retrieved as a plurality of packets.

8. The method of claim 7 further comprising:

15 prior to retrieving said desired content from at least one other client, retrieving a header associated with said plurality of packets from said content server, said header comprising information identifying said packets.

9. The method of claim 7 further comprising:

verifying reception of said plurality of packets; and

if one of said plurality of packets has been corrupted in reception, repeating
5 retrieval of said corrupted packet.

10. The method of claim 7 further comprising:

verifying reception of said plurality of packets; and

if one of said plurality of packets has been corrupted in reception, retrieving an
10 uncorrupted packet from another source and replacing said corrupted source packet with
said uncorrupted packet.

11. A method for operating a peer-to-peer network, said method comprising:

sending a list of peers from a content broker to a first peer in a peer-to-peer
15 network; and

employing a push method to send content from said first peer to a second peer
belonging to said list of peers.

12. The method of claim 11 wherein said first peer is accessed by said peer-to-peer network via a network address translation mechanism.

5 13. The method of claim 11 wherein said first peer monitors available downloading bandwidth and initiates transfer of content pursuant to said push method when excess downloading bandwidth is available.

10 14. A method for operating a content distribution network, said method comprising:

assigning a plurality of clients to a plurality of peer-to-peer networks;

sending each of said plurality of clients list information to identify network peers of said peers, said list information identifying at least one dedicated content server and at least one client peer; and

15 distributing content via said plurality of peer-to-peer networks.

15. The method of claim 14 wherein said list information comprises a plurality of dedicated content servers ranked by priority.

16. The method of claim 15 wherein said priority ranking is based on cost.

17. The method of claim 15 wherein said priority ranking is based on
5 available bandwidth.

18. The method of claim 15 wherein said priority ranking varies over time of
day.

19. The method of claim 14 wherein assigning comprises assigning based on
10 content interest profiles of said clients.

20. The method of claim 14 wherein said list information identifies a plurality
of dedicated content servers selected based on availability of specific content.

15 21. A method for operating a content distribution network, said method
comprising:

assigning a plurality of clients to a plurality of peer-to-peer networks;

sending each of said plurality of clients list information to identify network peers
of said clients; and

refreshing said list over time to include only available peers.

5

22. A method for operating a publisher server to distribute content, said
method comprising:

preparing said content for distribution;

transferring said content to a content server; and

10 transferring information identifying said content to a catalog server; and

wherein clients retrieve said content either directly or indirectly from said content
server after retrieving said identifying information from said catalog server.

23. The method of claim 22 wherein preparing said content comprises:

15 encrypting said content.

24. The method of claim 22 wherein preparing said content comprises:

formatting said content as a file, said file comprising a header and a plurality of packets.

5

25. The method of claim 22 wherein said information identifying said content comprises information identifying a channel to which said content belongs.

26. The method of claim 22 wherein said channel comprises an asset.

10

27. The method of claim 22 wherein said asset is a song.

28. The method of claim 22 wherein said asset is a news program.

15

29. The method of claim 22 further comprising:

prior to preparing said content, retrieving said content from a content source.